

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE CENTENNIAL COMMISSION

SEVENTH REPORT TO CONGRESS AND THE PRESIDENT

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1920  2020
WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE
CENTENNIAL
COMMISSION

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INTRODUCTION

The Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission (WSCC) was created by Congress to mark the 100-year anniversary of women's right to vote in 2020 and to ensure that the untold stories of women's decades-long battle for the ballot are recognized and celebrated across the U.S. We are committed to telling an inclusive, diverse, and complete history of the fight for the vote, and we are proud to be leading the nationwide commemorations of this historic centennial.

But this report comes at an extraordinary time for our country and the world. The unprecedented impact of COVID-19 has forced women's history organizations like the WSCC to re-visit our approach to the centennial commemorations, necessitating a greater focus on digital initiatives and projects and a shift away from in-person events and celebrations. However, history has a way of repeating itself, and the lessons learned during the suffrage movement provide us with a path forward in these difficult times.

The 1918 Spanish flu claimed the lives of 50 million people worldwide, 675,000 Americans died, and parts of the U.S. economy shut down. Over a third of the world's population caught the "great influenza", which disproportionately affected young men. The concurrence of the Spanish flu and WWI created a workforce shortage, and women stepped in to fill the gap. Taking on jobs traditionally reserved for men, more women entered the workplace than ever before. But the inequality that women experienced in their new roles, like pay inequity and harsh working conditions, meant that universal suffrage and the right to be represented in government was more important than ever before. The suffrage movement, which could have been derailed by the crises gripping the world, was instead strengthened, and after 72 years of work, sacrifice, and perseverance, women finally won the right to vote in 1920. One hundred years later, amid another global pandemic, we carry on our work to honor and remember their achievements.

In this report, we highlight the Commission's progress, plans, and partnerships for the centennial of the ratification of the 19th Amendment during these unprecedented times. We find hope in remembering the struggles and sacrifices suffragists endured throughout their decades-long movement, and know that if there is one thing we can learn from the suffragists, it is perseverance.



SUFFRAGIST AND ABOLITIONIST
FREDERICK DOUGLASS, C. 1855

A DIGITAL SHIFT



Many of the Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission's projects and partnerships will be able to continue largely as planned, despite the impact of COVID-19, including: the Commission's partnership with the American Library Association to provide 18,000 children's suffrage history books to 6,000 underserved libraries across the U.S.; the Commission's suffrage history podcasting projects with podcast leader Public Radio International (PRX); the Commission's online webstore, which is dedicated to creating original and historical suffrage centennial merchandise that educates and inspires; the Commission's contribution of statues of suffragists to the Lucy Burns Museum, the Memphis Suffrage Memorial, and the National Turning Point Memorial; and the Commission's online article series, "The Suff Buffs," which brings together an unparalleled anthology of suffrage literature available free of charge for students, educators, and lifelong learners on the Commission's website.

Other Commission projects and partnerships have been reshaped to address the changing nature of the coronavirus crisis. The record breaking all-women skydiving jump with Project 19 and the Women's Skydiving Network, originally planned for July 2020, has been postponed until October 2020. And the WSCC's National Suffrage Week, originally planned for May 2020, has been postponed to August 2020, rebranded as National Suffrage Month, and moved primarily online.

A number of digital initiatives have been added to the Commission's project list as we work to support a new educational environment in which access to world-class, free online learning tools is essential. Over the past month, the Commission has: 1) made significant website improvements, including the launch of a new Learn Page that serves as a portal for children and adults to online suffrage history resources, activities, games, and media; 2) launched a Facebook Live *HerStory Time* series in partnership with the American Library Association featuring Commissioners and librarians reading children's suffrage history books; 3) begun hosting suffrage history webinars and online history happy hours for adults with our federal and nonprofit partners; 4) created a weekly *HerStory Corner* electronic newsletter to better share online suffrage resources with our community; and 5) renewed our emphasis on social media to engage a wide and diverse audience.

The WSCC is flexible and committed as the nation moves through the COVID-19 crisis, working to bring suffrage history to life in as many ways and on as many platforms as possible. Our mission, both online and off, remains to inspire and educate Americans during this once-in-a-lifetime milestone of American democracy.

MEETING SUMMARY



The Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission held our eighth public meeting at the Library of Congress on March 3, 2020. Dr. Carla Hayden, the current Librarian of Congress and the first woman and the first African-American to hold the post, opened the WSCC's visit by describing the vital role the Library serves in uplifting and preserving women's stories. Dr. Hayden shared, "The Library curates the papers of Susan B. Anthony, Carrie Chapman Catt, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Mary Church Terrell, and Clara Barton. My predecessor, Librarian of Congress Ainsworth Spofford, deserves credit for this amazing collection. He convinced his friend, Susan B. Anthony, that the Library of Congress would be the best place for her materials and papers. Other suffragists soon followed, and that's why we have the premier collection of papers chronicling the longest social movement in American history." Following her remarks, Dr. Hayden accompanied the Commissioners on a tour of the Library's exceptional women's suffrage exhibit, *Shall Not Be Denied: Women Fight for the Vote*.

During the meeting, the Commissioners discussed the WSCC's centennial programs, partnerships, initiatives, and campaigns. Five partner organizations presented their plans to commemorate the centennial in collaboration with the Commission, including the Library of Congress National Book Festival, the Women's Skydiving Network, the Votes for Women Trail, Public Radio International, C. Forbes, Inc., and the American Library Association. Following the presentations, Dr. Colleen Shogan gave a lecture on race and gender in the suffrage movement, and the Commission held an open comment period for public questions and suggestions.

The Commission will hold a public telephonic meeting on June 3, 2020, and we will hold our final in-person meeting on October 8, 2020 at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History.

PROJECT UPDATES

SUFFRAGE HISTORY POPUP EXHIBIT

The Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission (WSCC) and the National Archives have partnered together to educate Americans across the country about the history of women's fight for their right to vote. Through support from the WSCC, the National Archives is providing 2,500 free popup displays, titled *Rightfully Hers*, to schools and cultural institutions nationwide in honor of the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment and women's constitutional right to vote.



Rightfully Hers contains simple messages exploring the history of the ratification of the 19th Amendment and the state of voting rights before and after the women's suffrage movement. The National Archives delivered 1,600 of these popups to venues throughout the states in 2019. The partnership between the WSCC and the National Archives will provide access to this important history to even more communities around the U.S. in 2020.

Debra Steidel Wall, Deputy Archivist of the United States, who was appointed to represent the National Archives on the Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission, said, "I am thrilled that these two institutions are able to work together to amplify women's stories and share far and wide one of the most important moments of American history. The National Archives is home to some of the most powerful records of the women's suffrage movement, including the 19th Amendment itself; through the Rightfully Hers popup displays, we can bring engaging and invaluable content from these materials to communities across the country."

Corinne Porter, curator of the National Archives' suffrage centennial exhibit *Rightfully Hers: American Women and the Vote*, on which the popup displays are based, said, "Commemorating the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment provides an unparalleled opportunity to elevate the untold stories of women's history. The exhibit at the National Archives and the Rightfully Hers popups are part of our nationwide initiative to share the story of the relentless struggle of diverse activists throughout U.S. history to secure voting rights for all American women."

Lightweight and versatile, the free *Rightfully Hers* displays are easy to assemble and will be delivered to venues by July 2020 to display leading up to the official centennial in August and beyond. Participating venues will receive digital educational and press materials, and can keep and re-use the display.

The WSCC is privileged to support the work of the National Archives and to provide this invaluable suffrage history resource to communities across the U.S.

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STUDENT OUTREACH PROGRAM

Written by playwright Mat Smart, *The Agitators* tells the story of the enduring, tempestuous friendship of Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglass. Young abolitionists when they met in the 1840s, they were full of hopes, dreams, and common purpose. *The Agitators* is the story of their 45-year friendship, from its beginning in Rochester to the highest halls of government. They agitated the nation, they agitated each other, and in doing so, they helped shape the Constitution and the course of American history.



Riverside Theater production
of *The Agitators*

The Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission partnered with Phoenix Theater in Indianapolis, Indiana and Riverside Theater in Iowa City, Iowa to sponsor special live student performances of *The Agitators*. Hundreds of high school students attended the shows free-of-charge, discovering this untold chapter of women's long battle for the ballot through exceptional live theater.

PUBLIC ART GRANT PROGRAM

The WSCC and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) are partnering (pending the final approval of an inter-agency agreement) to provide six fully-funded grants to arts organizations across the U.S. to create celebratory, educational, and inspirational suffrage centennial murals. The murals will be erected nationwide throughout 2020 and 2021.

The WSCC is committed to telling the stories of the suffrage movement in ways that make women's history visible and accessible, and we are proud to partner with the NEA to ensure that this history is taught, told, and remembered for the next 100 years.



A suffrage centennial mural in
Austin, TX.

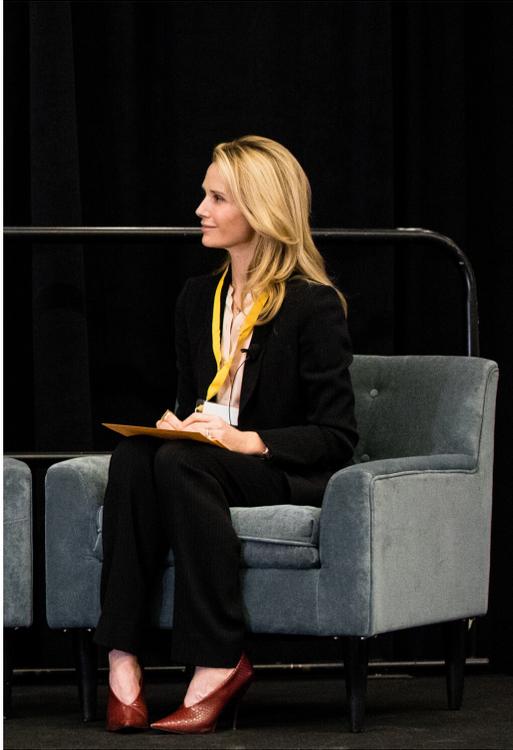
CENTENNIAL MOTORCYCLE RIDE

The Suffragists Centennial Motorcycle Ride is a multi-route cross-country motorcycle event in August 2020 celebrating the ratification of the 19th Amendment and inspiring women today to "make their own unique mark on history." Hundreds of bikers from ten starting cities will converge in Washington, D.C. to honor the women who fought for the right to vote.

The WSCC is excited to be partnering with the Suffragists Centennial Motorcycle Ride to provide the participants with replica purple, gold, and white suffrage sashes to bring visibility to the suffrage story as the riders cross the U.S.



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Pictured Above: Jennifer Siebel Newsom, First Partner of California and WSCC Commissioner



Pictured Above from L to R: Susan Hutchinson, First Lady of Arkansas; Maria Lee, First Lady of Tennessee; Kathy Evers, First Lady of Wisconsin; Jennifer Siebel Newsom, First Partner of California and WSCC Commissioner

SHARING THE HISTORY AT THE NATIONAL GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION

In February 2020, the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission partnered together to present "100 Years of Women's Suffrage: Engaging, Activating, and Inspiring Your State" to more than thirty governors' spouses at the NGA's biannual convention in Washington, D.C.

The program began with a presentation by WSCC Director of Communications Kelsey Millay. The WSCC encouraged the governors' spouses in attendance to amplify their state's suffrage history and inspire their communities to engage in the WSCC's centennial projects, partnerships, initiatives, and campaigns.

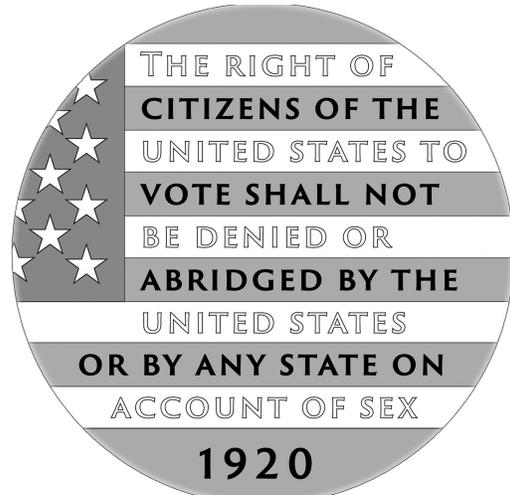
Following the WSCC's presentation, First Partner of California and WSCC Commissioner Jennifer Siebel Newsom led a panel discussion with Susan Hutchinson, First Lady of Arkansas, Maria Lee, First Lady of Tennessee, and Kathy Evers, First Lady of Wisconsin. The panel shared their thoughts and ideas on elevating and celebrating the centennial in their states.

Today, the WSCC is proud to continue working alongside the NGA, governors, and governors' spouses to bring the story of the 19th Amendment to Americans nationwide.

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SUFFRAGE CENTENNIAL SILVER MEDAL

In partnership with the Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission, the United States Mint officially announced the design for the 2020 Women's Suffrage Centennial Silver Medal in April 2020.

Developed in conjunction with the 2020 Women's Suffrage Centennial Silver Dollar, this limited edition 99.9% silver medal will accompany the silver dollar celebrating the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment.

Jovita Carranza, former U.S. Treasurer and member of the Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission, said, "The Women's Suffrage Centennial Silver Medal is a beautiful tribute to the women and men who fought for women's right to vote and the expansion of American democracy."

The silver medal will only be available in the Women's Suffrage Centennial Proof Silver Dollar and Medal Set, with a limited production of 10,000 sets. The medal will be available in bronze beginning sometime in 2021. All costs associated with the production of the medals will be covered by the retail price of these products. The obverse of the medal was designed by Artistic Infusion Program (AIP) artist Beth Zaiken and sculpted by United States Mint Medallist Renata Gordon. The reverse of the medal was designed by AIP artist Patricia Lucas-Morris and sculpted by United States Mint Medallist Renata Gordon.

The Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission extends its gratitude to the U.S. Mint and Commissioner Carranza for their commitment to this project and their work to ensure that the centennial of the ratification of the 19th Amendment is honored and celebrated.

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SUFFRAGE CENTENNIAL SILVER DOLLAR

In partnership with the Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission and the Smithsonian Institute, the United States Mint officially announced the design for the Women's Suffrage Centennial Silver Dollar in April 2020.

"This coin pays homage to the 19th Amendment's adoption, and also honors the many pioneers, activists, and foot soldiers in the movement who fought bravely and tenaciously for decades to make the amendment a reality," said United States Mint Director David J. Ryder.

The 2020 Women's Suffrage Centennial Silver Dollar is authorized by Public Law 116-71 to commemorate the ratification of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. Artistic Infusion Program artist Christina Hess designed both the obverse (heads) and reverse (tails) of the coin, which were both sculpted by United States Mint Medallist Artist Phebe Hemphill. Surcharges of \$10 per coin sold are authorized to be paid to the Smithsonian Institution's American Women's History Initiative for research and the creation of diverse exhibits and programs that highlight the history and impact of women in the United States. The legislation authorizes the Mint to strike and issue up to 400,000 \$1 silver coins.

"The Smithsonian is honored to join the U.S. Mint in recognizing and celebrating American women's history with the unveiling of this commemorative coin," said Julissa Marengo, Assistant Secretary of the Smithsonian and a Commissioner on the Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission. "In one of America's most defining moments, this historic centennial offers an unparalleled opportunity to empower women—past, present and future."

CONCLUSION

The suffragists persevered in their quest for women's equality through generations of hardships and crises. So too will we persevere through these unexpected times to celebrate their work, educate new generations about this critical chapter in the history of American democracy, and leave a legacy that will inspire for the next 100 years. Together with our partners, we are privileged to lead the centennial commemorations of the women who waged and won the battle for the vote, and through our nationwide programs, projects, initiatives, and campaigns, we will honor the courage of the suffragists and inspire a new generation of brave leaders and engaged learners.

WSCC COMMISSIONERS

Chairwoman, Susan Combs | Fmr. Assistant Secretary, Department of the Interior
Vice Chairwoman, Colleen Shogan | Senior Vice President and Director of the David Rubenstein Center for White House History, White House Historical Association

Jovita Carranza | Administrator, Small Business Administration
Marjorie Dannenfelser | President, Susan B. Anthony List
Heather Higgins | CEO, Independent Women's Voice
Karen Hill | President and CEO, Harriet Tubman Home
Kay Coles James | President, The Heritage Foundation
Julissa Marenco | Assistant Secretary, Smithsonian Institution
Senator Barbara Mikulski (Ret.)
Nicola Miner | Instructor and Philanthropist
Cleta Mitchell | Partner, Foley & Lardner, LLP
Penny Nance | President, Concerned Women For America
Jennifer Siebel Newsom | Filmmaker and First Partner of California
Debra Steidel Wall | Deputy Archivist, U.S. National Archives

Anna Laymon | Executive Director

Learn more about the centennial and the WSCC on our website,
www.womensvote100.org

